



MICHIGAN HEALTH & HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

Advocating for hospitals and the patients they serve.

TO: Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

FROM: Chris Mitchell, Senior Director, Advocacy

DATE: March 19, 2013

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 250 – Assault of a Medical Professional

MHA Position: **SUPPORT** (concept)

The Michigan Health & Hospital Association (MHA) supports the concept of Senate Bill 250 as introduced by Sen. Goeff Hansen (R-Hart). This bill would amend the Michigan Penal Code to provide additional protections for certain health professionals while they are delivering patient care. Under the bill, an assault of ambulance operators and attendants; nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, physicians and physician assistants would be a felony punishable by up to four years imprisonment and/or a maximum fine of \$5000.

Violence against health care workers reflects a disturbing trend. According to a 2010 Bureau of Labor Statistics analysis, almost sixty percent of assaults in the workplace occurred in a health care setting. Nearly three-quarters of these assaults were by patients or residents of a health facility.

While the MHA is supportive of the intent of Senate Bill 250, the hospital community would propose a friendly amendment which would expand the list of health care providers to be afforded the additional protections against assault while delivering patient care. It is critical to include any person employed by a hospital or health system that provides direct care to a patient who is licensed, certified or regulated under the Public Health code and those who are supervised by these regulated professionals. These front line providers care for patients every day and are just as at to violence every day they go to work.

Governor Snyder's Office of Regulatory Reinvention recommendation regarding occupational licensing includes deregulating 18 different professions including Speech Pathologists, Respiratory Therapists, Occupational Therapists and Dietitians and Nutritionists. It is paramount to keep these health care providers protected against violence despite the recommendation to eliminate their regulation under state law.

A safe environment for both patients and health care professionals is vital for Michigan hospitals to continue delivering the highest quality of care. The MHA appreciates Senator Hansen's efforts to provide additional protections from violence against health care professionals. **We look forward to working the bill sponsor over the upcoming legislative recess to include all health care professionals who are at risk of violence while providing direct patient care.**

Please contact Chris Mitchell (cmitchell@mha.org) at (517) 703-8622 at the MHA if you have further questions on this issue.

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